Towards a Less Subjective Model of Singability Analysis

Investigating the Persian Translation of Dubbed Songs in Animated Movies

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Song Translation as a relevant area to Translation Studies has been receiving much attention over the past decade. As Song Translation grows, so does the urge to develop a resourceful model to assist researchers in this domain, to study and understand translated songs and hopefully propose solutions to tackle some issues regarding translating a song that would be performable and singable. The two most common models to analyze the singability of translated songs were proposed by Low (2003; 2008) and Franzon (2008). These two models are compatible; therefore, in the current study, they have been merged and adjusted to analyze the Persian translations of dubbed songs. In doing so, attempts have been made to fabricate a less subjective model by developing a marking system. The recommended model was verified by applying it to twenty-five songs selected from five animated movies, namely *Trolls* (2016), *Sing* (2016), *Moana* (2016), *Coco* (2017), and *Smallfoot* (2018).

1. Introduction

Song Translation Research has been prompted by studies on "literary translation, poetry translation, stage translation, and screen translation" (Bosseaux 2011: 1). Song Translation is not only restricted to free-standing songs, sometimes songs constitute some segments in movies, because they might be original soundtracks (OST) narrating a part of the plot (Tobing and Laksman-Huntley 2017); hence it is of paramount importance to translate the songs alongside dialogues. This venture is not merely about rendering the lyrics, but creating a translation that would match the original music as well; therefore, "a clever illusion must be created, as the TT must give the overall impression that the music has been devised to fit it" (Bosseaux 2011: 4).

Over the last three decades, studies on Song Translation have been growing in number, and opera translation studies had outnumbered other types while pop song translation and musical translation were the least explored ones (Jiménez 2017). A possible proposition to study song translation is the

implication of singability models. There are some well-known models in this regard proposed by Low (2003; 2008) and Franzon (2008). Khoshsaligheh and Ameri (2016) combined these models by disregarding the overlaps and adding the element of lip-synchronization to study the translation of dubbed songs from English into Persian. As a pioneering study in exploring Persian dubbed songs, the combined model they proposed opened a window to many exciting possibilities. However, the issue of subjectivity on the part of the researcher still remains. Consequently, in this study, efforts were made to present a *less subjective*[1] singability model as a means to investigate the Persian translations of songs in dubbed animated movies.

2. Literature Review

Previous studies on Song Translation have been dedicated to different aspects of this area such as reception of translated songs, restrictions of translating songs, strategies used in translating them, and appropriate models or frameworks for studying translations, also known as 'singability models'. In the current section, some studies pertaining to these issues are cited. In the last two subsections 2.1. and 2.2., the most common singability models are highlighted.

One of the first reception studies on Song Translation was conducted in 2008. Di Giovanni (2008) explored the reception of Italian translations of fifteen American film musicals with an emphasis on the visibility and invisibility of the translators. She explained the specificities of the language by introducing three concepts: the musical number (the number of songs, dances and duets), star persona (the role film stars play in conveying the language of the musical), and duality (an influential component on the other two that expresses two different characters, two different worlds, etc.). Then she examined the reception of the Italian version by considering the strategies that translators employed both on the macro and micro levels. The major strategies adopted on the macro level in translation of musicals in Italy are dubbing, subtitling, mixed translation, and partial translation. However, the only concern of her study was the fully dubbed versions.

Di Giovanni (2008) then emphasized the possibility that the visibility of the translator in case of AVT seems irrational since the translator is not the only person in charge of dubbing an AV product (mostly the distributors in Italy decide on whether to translate any part of the film or not), and more importantly, the more visible the translator in an AV product, the less fluent the translated text will

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[1] The phrase 'entirely objective' is intentionally avoided since, in Translation Studies, such a claim might seem to be a very far-fetched objective.

be. In conclusion, the lack of agency on the part of AV translator can ensure two claims about the adoption of certain translation strategies: these strategies were chosen based on the economic situation defined by the distributors, and partial or full translation of film musicals played a significant role in changing the Italian audience's reception of this genre.

A year later, Cintrão (2009) emphasized the limitations of song translation imposed by both melodic and poetic elements to prepare the grounds for justifying that in translating songs, only "creative transposition" is possible (Cintrão 2009: 238). Having this concept in mind, he introduced the translations of song lyrics by Gilberto Gil and his adaptation of the song "I just called to say I love you" by Stevie Wonder into Portuguese. By comparing the original lyrics with the culturally adapted version, he came to conclusions that Gil was more of a co-author than a translator due to his own way of reading the original (identifying what was necessary or unnecessary to include in his version of the lyrics), but his version seems to be close to the original's structure, cohesion and coherence, content message, and image. Gil's decisions, seemed to be originated from the original lyrics, but had a tendency towards the target culture and target norms.

Åkerström (2010) asserted that translating song lyrics should be called 'text arrangement' or 'interpretation,' not translation. With the aim of understanding the translation process and strategies, she studied three musicals, *Chess*, *Mamma Mia!* from English into Swedish and *Kristina från Duvemåla* from Swedish into English to investigate 10 translation features occurrences in 12 songs. The features are as follows:

- Additions of words
- Use of rhymes
- Word count
- Omission of words
- Syllables vs. words
- Use of paraphrases
- Use of metaphors
- Use of English words in the translations
- Word-for-word translation
- Reorganization of words and lines of text

The results of Åkerström's (2010) study on song lyrics translation showed that English original songs had fewer words than the translated Swedish versions, while the opposite was true for the Swedish original songs. One reason for this could be the fact that in English, the article *the* stands separately

from noun phrases, while in Swedish, it becomes a part of the word. Besides, the number of syllables in the source text exactly matched the number of syllables in the translated text. Also, the use of word-for-word translation, additions, omissions, and the use of English words in translated versions were rare and in some cases none. Furthermore, she compared ST and TT metaphors and concluded that the difference was insignificant. The number of rhymes varied in each musical due to the particular meter or rhyme patterns that each song holds. She also figured out that the most frequent translation strategy used in translating songs was the use of paraphrases. A worthwhile issue about the research corpus is that two musicals were selected from English into Swedish, but the researcher did not mention why she included a Swedish musical in the corpus as well, while choosing another English musical, if possible, could make the corpus more focused and homogeneous, as she pointed out in conclusion section: "whether or not English words are actually avoided in Swedish song translations, is impossible to say based on the small scope of this study" (Åkerström 2010: 28). Thus, the researcher herself mentions the need for a more precise and exhaustive corpus. Notwithstanding, some discrepancies in the results such as the word count and reorganization are due to this fact.

Three years later, Pedram (2013), in her M.A. thesis, studied the process of translating and dubbing animation songs in Iran from English into Persian. The data was analyzed at both macro and micro levels, by employing Low's (2003) and Schjoldager's (2008) models, for each phase, respectively. The results of the study demonstrated that translators did not manage to consider 'sense,' 'naturalness,' and 'rhythm' at macro level of analysis and, at the micro level, they employed 'paraphrase' strategy the most of all. This led to the conclusion that the translations of songs were mostly target text-oriented.

2.1. Low's pentathlon principle

Low's (2003) 'pentathlon principle' defines singability, sense, naturalness, rhythm, and rhyme as essential components to create singable translations of songs.

2.1.1. Singability

Singability in Low's words is a pragmatic criterion that "must receive top priority in [song] translation. This is a logical result of thinking in terms of the target text's specific purpose, its skopos" (Low 2003: 93). Singability is closely related to the effectiveness of a performable text. This effectiveness may be endangered by several possibilities; for instance, performing consonant clusters, singing short-

sounded words on long notes, and mismatching emphasized words to unstressed musical notes (Low 2008).

2.1.2. Sense

In Low's pentathlon principle, the issue of semantic meaning is also highlighted, but he asserts that in case of a constraint such as singability, some slight changes in the sense is required. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that these changes or manipulations must remain as little as possible because "the transfer of the meaning remains an important criterion" (Low 2008: 94). These manipulations can include replacing the original word with a near-synonym, a narrow term by a superordinate term, or substituting a particular metaphor by another one which functions in a similar way in the context.

2.1.3. Naturalness

To assess the naturalness of a text, elements like register and word order must be taken into account (Low 2008). A singable translation of a poem should be able to communicate efficiently and excellently with the audience right at the moments when it is being performed. An unnatural translation demands much more cognitive efforts on the part of the audience. Yet, Low does not declare that naturalness should be preserved at any cost. For this reason, it is to be noted that some minor changes in word order is anticipated in Persian translations of lyrics, such as substituting noun and adjective with one another (in Persian, adjectives come after the noun), therefore گل زیبایی دیدم. /goli zibā didam/ "I saw a beautiful flower" might change into زیبا گلی دیدم /zibā goli didam/ in a poem. However, what is considered as unnatural in the current study, are cases such as فردا رو می آغازیم /farad-ro miāqāzim/ (back translation for this line from "Where You Are" is "we will begin tomorrow or future"). The Persian word آغاز /āqāz/ "start" is a noun that received inflectional affixes that are merely specific to verbs.

2.1.4. Rhyme

In some cases, such as subtitling, it is possible to skip the rhyme in translating a song. Nevertheless, in other types of translation, the retention of the rhyming pattern is required. Sometimes song translators succeed in preserving the number of rhymes and even their exact location; however, this normally happens when other important elements of song have been sacrificed. For this reason, Low (2008) asserts that flexibility and compromise are the key solution to a good singable translation.

2.1.5. Rhythm

Rhythm is closely related to syllable counts. In the pentathlon principle, rendering the exact number of syllables is desirable. However, in many cases this cannot happen. For instance, English poetry would not usually favor long lines of eight syllables. Consequently, the translator omits a syllable or two on a repeated note. If it is required to add a syllable, they would compromise by adding it on a melisma.[2] This is a change in verbal rhythm, but sometimes the music is manipulated as well. For example, sometimes an upbeat has to be broken down into two small notes in order to be adjusted for the verbal rhythm.

2.2. Franzon's Model of Singability

Franzon (2008) devised his model of singability based on the European melopoetic norm that consists of three layers: prosodic, poetic, and semantic-reflexive layers. For a translated song to be singable, it should match these layers. Each one of these layers can be achieved by observing the music's melody, structure, and expression that are manifested in the text by different elements.

A singable lyric achieves	by observing the music's	which may appear in the text as
1. a prosodic match	*melody*: music as notated, producing lyrics that are comprehensible and sound natural when sung	syllable count; rhythm; intonation, stress; sounds for easy singing
2. a poetic match	*structure*: music as performed, producing lyrics that attract the audience' attention and achieve poetic effect	rhyme; segmentation of phrases/lines/stanzas; parallelism and contrast; location of key words
3. a semantic-reflexive match	*expression*: music perceived as meaningful, producing lyrics that reflect or explain what the music 'says'	the story told, mood conveyed, character(s) expressed; description (word-painting); metaphor

Table 1. Functional consequences of match between lyrics and music (adopted from Franzon 2008: 390)

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[2] A group of notes that are sung on one syllable.

3. Proposed Model of Singability

In the current study, the singability of Persian translations of dubbed songs were analyzed through a merged model. This model is a combination of Low's and Franzon's models and an added element of 'lip-synchronization' in order to make a more precise conclusion about those songs that are performed in close-up shots; therefore, this element would be considered only when necessary. As Franzon (2008) stated, items presented in his model should be considered as layers with descending levels of importance. As "the semantic-reflexive match seems to presuppose [prosodic match and poetic match] presence" (Franzon 2008, 391). Therefore, in the current research, elements presented at prosodic and poetic levels are of paramount importance, and their scoring system will be elaborated below. In figure 1, the direction of significance is top down, thus semantic-reflexive match is of the least importance.
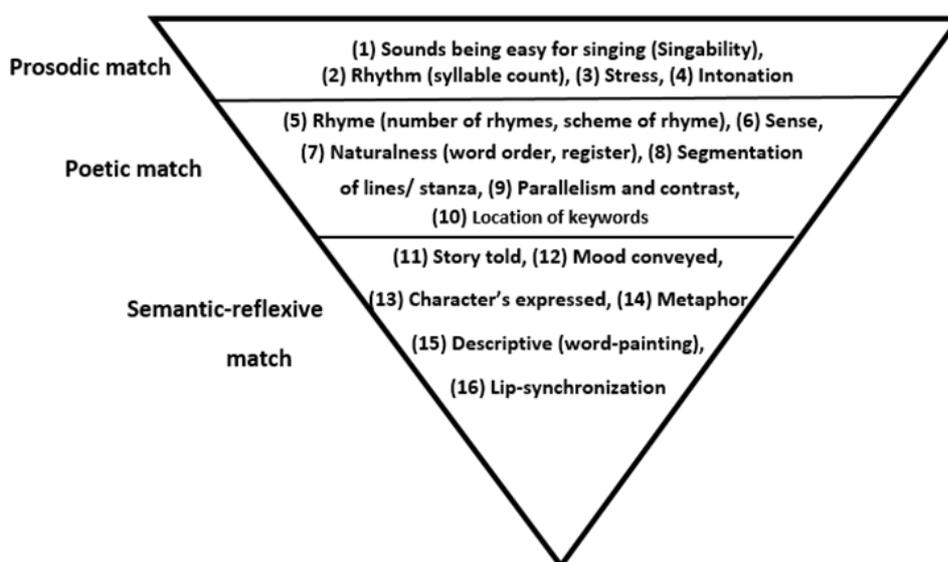

Figure 1. Singability Analysis Model

Further explanations seem necessary for some of the items presented such as Word-painting. Some songs enjoy a melody that is composed to match the literal lyrics. In this note sheet taken from the song "I Am Moana", the words 'falling and rising' are sung on falling and rising notes (see Figure 2). Word-painting is difficult to maintain and is highly dependent on the sense of the translation.

Figure 2. Word-painting example on an excerpt of "I am Moana" note sheet

There are eight types of mood defined by Thayer as shown in figure 3 below (Bhat, Amith, Prasad and Mohan 2014). For example, the mood of the song "It's a Sunshine Day" from *Trolls*, is energetic because it has the high tempo of 130 beats per minute (bpm), while a normal tempo has 120 bpm.
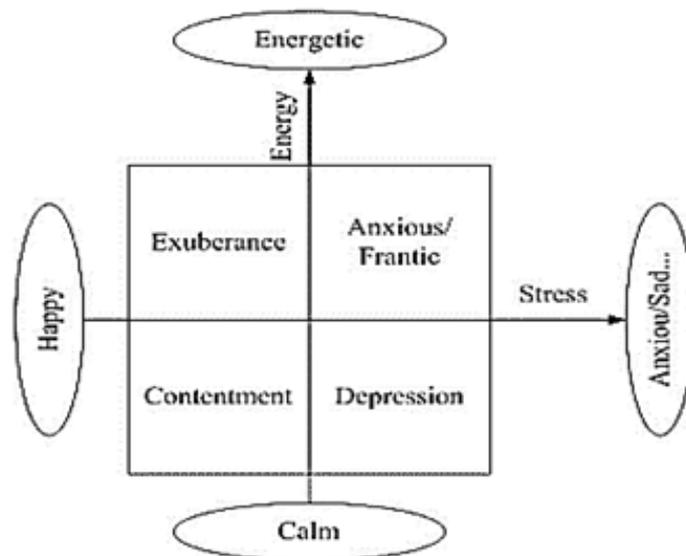

Figure 3. Thyler's Mood Model (adopted from Bhat et al. *2014: 359)*

In assessing rhyming words two features should be taken into consideration; frequency and quality (Low 2008). Depending on the rhyming pattern of each stanza, the frequency of the rhyme is different; sometimes a verse has rhyming words in every two lines, or even two or more rhyming words in each line (Low 2008). The significance of each rhyme needs to be prioritized by assessing the rhyme's audible effect (Low 2008). In any musical measure, there are two types of beats: downbeat and upbeat. Most of the time more than one note is played on each beat and each note carries one syllable of the lyrics. The beat is best realized by clapping hands along with the music. The time when the hands meet is downbeat and upbeat is the timing between each two downbeats; that is, the time hands get away from each other. The rhyming words are often located on downbeats which is more stressed and louder and therefore, makes the rhyming syllable more audible. To get a clear image of this technique, notice the

notes sheet of an excerpt selected from the song "Get Back Up Again" from *Trolls* (Figure 3). Note how the music lengthens the rhyming syllables 'sky' and 'fly' in the word *butterfly.*
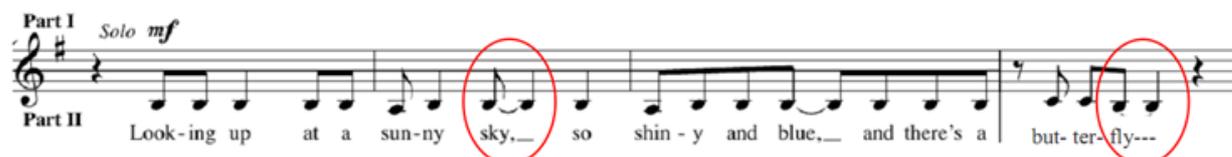

Figure 4. Rhymes on downbeats

1.   Looking up at a sunny sky,

/āsemun-e āftabi/آسمون آفتابی

So shiny and blue

/ye parvāneye/یه پروانه‌ی

And there's a butterfly

/ḵoškel-o ābi/خوشکل و آبی

(back translation: "Sunny day, a butterfly, pretty and blue")

This type of rhyme is normally called 'clinching rhyme' and it "closes the pattern in a satisfying way at the very point where a sentence ends" (Low 2008: 7), and usually comes before the singer takes a deep and long breath. Transferring these rhymes and specially those at the end of a refrain, is much more important than translating the passing rhymes or intermediate rhymes because the latter are less audible. Also, there is no need to translate every single rhyming word in a piece of song; what matters more is not to create a weak clinching rhyme (Low 2008). In example 1, the rhyming original words are replaced by a pair of perfect rhymes 'آفتابی' /āftābi/ (meaning sunny) and آبی /ābi/ (meaning blue) that both end in the same syllable (/bi/) strengthening the clinching rhyme satisfactorily.

   Singability as an item refers to sounds in a translated song to be easy for singing; Franzon (2008) stated this as 'phonetic suitability' of words and the way the consonants and vowels are arranged. In other words, there should be a harmony between singing lyrics and playing musical notes. For instance, an open rhyming syllable cannot end in short vowels if its relate note is long. Also, the consonant clusters in two adjacent words can make it difficult to articulate. Therefore, it is required to avoid beginning a word with the same consonant that the preceding words endes in.

2   And there's a cold lonely light that shines from you

/delet tanhā-o negarune/ دلت تنها و تاریک و نگرونه .

(back translation: "Your heart is lonely, dark and worried")

In example 2, the second word in Persian translation begins with /t/ sound that ended the preceding word (/delet tanhā/) which makes the ideal singability hard to achieve. In example 3 below, chosen from "Moment of Truth," the translation of the line does not include sounds that would be easy for singing, especially in a song with such a fast tempo (130 bpm) and short lines, where the exact same consonant and vowel (/je/) follows in the adjacent word; /vāse-je je taqjir/.

3.   But if it's ever gonna change

/vali vāse-je je taqjir/ ولی واسه‌ی یه تغییر

(back translation: "But for a change…")

Low (2008) also mentioned the inevitable essence of flexibility in rendering the sense of the source text, and the undoubtedly needed tools and compensations in transferring meaning in case of song translation. Nonetheless, the liberties the song translator takes must have limits, because in the context of songs, 'semantic details' are as important as phonetic features. In example 4, Moana gains back self-confidence after being so discouraged and, disappointed in herself. It is important to convey the semantic details of this line for the general message that the song carries; that is, to believe in herself. However, we see that the first line's translation has the opposite meaning.

4.   I've delivered us to where we are, I have journeyed farther

/unā manu ingā resundan, dars-e ḵodešuno dādan/اونا منو اینجا رسوندن، درس خودشونو دادن

(back translation: "They've delivered me to where I am, they taught me their lesson")

All these items will be analyzed based on Low's (2008) scoring scale of singability from null to ten. He devised a scale sheet for both Rhyme and Rhythm that are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Possible Options	For Closed Syllables	Point(s)	For Open Syllables	Point(s)
Consonant and the vowels on both sides	Love/glove	10	Belie/rely	10
Good rhyme	Love/ shove	8	Lie/fly	9
Consonant close but not identical	Love/rough	6	Lie/rye	7
Consonant different	Love/lug	2	Lie/die	5
Vowel close but not identical	Love/move	4	Lie/lay	3
Vowel different	Love/have	1	Lie/lee	1

Table 2. Rhyme scoring scales

In this study, scoring system for other elements, except Rhyme, in prosodic match and poetic match levels, would be the same as Rhythm assessment, that is, through subtracting one point whenever a problematic defect is detected.

Rhythmic variants already present in song	loses zero point
Small alteration to rhythm	loses one point
Small alteration to melody	loses three points

Table 3. Rhythm scoring scales

For transferring other items of semantic reflexive match, extra points will be allocated to the translations as bonus (6 points for a fair rendition, 8 points for a good one and 10 points for a very good transfer). The total score should not fall under 80 points in order to be considered as singable; since Low believes that earning 8 points on each factor would be considered as a 'real success' (Low 2008: 18).

5. Results and Discussion

The proposed singability model was authenticated by analyzing twenty-five songs from five animated movies (the data is presented in Table 4). All songs were translated and dubbed by Soren Studio, a private Persian dubbing studio in Iran. Table 5 is an example of a non-singable translation provided for "It's a Sunshine Day" from *Trolls*, scoring 72.33 points.

Movie Title	Songs
Trolls (2016)	"Move Your Feet" "Get Back Up Again" "The Sound of Silence" "Clint Eastwood" "It's A Sunshine Day"
Sing (2016)	"I'm Still Standing"
Moana (2016)	"Where You Are" "How Far I'll Go" "We Know the Way" "How Far I'll Go (reprise)" "You're Welcome" "Shiny" "I Am Moana" "Know Who You Are" "We Know the Way (reprise)" 9.
Coco (2017)	"Everyone Knows Juanita" "Un Poco Loco" "Proud Corzon" "Remember Me"
Smallfoot (2018)	"Perfection" "Wonderful Life" "Percy's Pressure" "Wonderful Questions" "Let It Lie" "Moment of Truth"

Table 4. The Research Data

Singability Item	Points	Explanations
Rhyme	8	Forty points were achieved on the rhyming words; hence the average would be 8 points.
Rhythm	5	There are 5 lines that have different syllable counts with the deviations more than 2 syllables.
Naturalness	3	—
Singability	10	No acoustically problematic word or phrase was found.
Sense	4	There were 3 cases of parallelism in this song. Therefore, all 10 points should be distributed among these three cases and only one of them was transferred in the Persian translation.
Parallelism	3.33	—
Location of Keyword(s)	None	The two words of Sunshine Day are the key phrase in the song which were replaced by 'oh, oh, oh' (having the same number of syllables) in the dubbed version.
Segmentation of Lines/Stanzas	10	No modifications were detected in the dubbed version of the song.
Intonation	10	—
Stress	9	In the translation, the stress is on the word 'به' as a preposition while the original's stress was placed on 'everybody' that caused a deduction in points since the stress has fell on the wrong word and caused some sort of unnatural emphasis.
Bonus	10	10 points are added for a very good rendition of mood.
Total Score	72.33	—

Table 5. "It's A Sunshine Day" singability analysis

Translations of songs were divided into several stanzas and then scrutinized (to see an example of the analysis process, refer to Appendix). The results of the examinations were illustrated in form of tables, such as table 6. This table is an instance of a singable translation of "How Far I'll Go" from *Moana* with 90.95 points. The rest of the songs received the same analysis procedure.

Singability Item	Points	Explanations
Rhyme	8.45	This is the average of 93 points as a total number for 11 cases.
Rhythm	5	—
Naturalness	6	—
Singability	10	—
Sense	10	—
Parallelism	7.5	Three cases out of four were actually transferred.
Location of Keyword(s)	10	تا کجاها، میشه پیدا ' The key words are 'how far I'll go' translated as /tā kodjāhā miše pejdā/ (back translation: "To where, it would be apparent").
Segmentation of Lines/Stanzas	9	—
Intonation	None	There were three cases of high pitched voice, all of which were sung in a rather constant voice.
Stress	9	—
Bonus	16	8 points are added for the good lip synchronization. And another 8 points are considered for the story of the song being told well (showing the inner conflict of the character between what her father and people want her to be, and what she wants to be herself).
Total Score	90.95	—

Table 6. "How Far I'll Go" singability analysis

The results of data analysis showed numerous trends. The whole corpus gained the average of 83.48 points on singability analysis.

The singable songs obtained 91.32 points as the average score with the most frequent item being Singability by 11% (figure 4). But since Singability is the highest occurred item for non-singable songs (15%) as well (figure 5), Singability does not seem to be what distinguishes singable translations form non-singable ones. This pattern is also true in case of Segmentation of lines which is one of the highest occurred items for both groups of singable translations (11%) and non-singable translations (12%).

A significance difference between singable translations of songs and non-singable ones is enlightened in the Location of keywords. For singable translations, this item's average score is 7.81 points while for non-singable translations, this value is absolute zero. This great deviation leads to the

conclusion that the Location of keywords is one of the most prominent factors that make the translation of a song singable. Not to mention that the correct rendition of the keywords is as much important as the location of them in the lyrics. The semantic meaning of the keyword is in line with the analysis of Sense. The results demonstrated that Sense value is considerably different between the two groups of translated songs (singable and non-singable); while the average for Sense in singable translations is 7.31 points, it is only 4.60 points for non-singable translations. It is essential to take into account that, in addition to technical constraints (such as lip-synchronization), cultural and ideological issues can also influence the loss of Sense in translating songs into Persian. In coping with culture-specific units in songs, two schemes were operated: omission and cultural adaptation. In the third stanza of "Where You Are", there is a reference to taro plant which is common in Africa and Oceania, but not in Western Asia where Iran is. For this reason, the translator chose to omit the reference all together (example 5).

5.   Don't trip on the taro root, that's all you need

/ārum ārum harkat kon ya nado/   آروم، آروم حرکت کن، یا ندو

(back translation: "Slowly, move slowly," or "don't run")

In some other cases, the cultural related item in the original is replaced with an Iranian culture-specific unit in translation. For instance, in "You're Welcome" (example 6), the character Maui is referring to his little tattoo of himself (that he calls mini-Maui) performing a tap dance. While Western societies are familiar with tap dancing, Iranians in general are not. Consequently, the translator adapts this line to an Iranian-specific kind of music called شیش و هشت (/šiš-o hašt/). This type of music has a rhythm of six eighths quaver notes. Its specific feature is an energetic and exuberant mood.

6.   Look at that mini-Maui just tippity-tappin'

/inā vaqti šiš-o hašti miše fāzam/اینا وقتی شیش و هشتی می‌شه فازم

(back translation: "This [is] when my musical mood becomes sweet")

A similar example of this strategy was observed in "I Am Moana" that expresses the journey of life and its difficulties, and later on in the song, how one should overcome them and move on. In Persian translation, this notion is compared to the darkness and obscurity of night, moreover, taking this comparison a step further to Yalda Night, an Iranian festival at the end of autumn that is known to be the longest and darkest night of the year. Although the translator here (example 7) associated absolute

darkness and despair to Yalda Night, for Iranians, this night does not convey hopelessness, but happiness. On Yalda Night, Iranians gather together with family and friends, celebrating, eating, drinking, and read poems by Hafez or other ancient Iranian poets.

7.   Sometimes the world seems against you

/bazi vaqta saḵt miše donyā/بعضی وقتا سخت می‌شه دنیا

The journey may leave a scar

/safar mizāre zaḵm be jā/سفر می‌ذاره زخم بجا

But scars can heal and reveal just, where you are

/šabhāt boland mesle šabe yaldā dar har jā/ شب‌هات بلند مثل شب یلدا، در هرجا

(back translation: "Sometimes life is hard, journey leaves scars, your nights are long like Yalda Night, in everywhere")

The other factor that endangers Sense in Persian translations of the songs, is the ideological considerations. Perhaps illustration of some examples from the corpus would serve better. In two different songs in *Moana*, "Where You Are" and "How Far I'll Go", Moana's father, who leads a Polynesian village called Motunui, tries to prepare Moana for her leadership after he is gone (example 8); and Moana herself refers to it in the song she sings afterwards (example 9). Her future leadership seems to me missed in both stanzas.

8.   Moana, stay on the ground now

/bešin-o ḵub tamašā kon/ بشین و خوب تماشا کن

Our people will need a chief

/be mardomemun negā kon/به مردممون نگا(ه) کن

And there you are

/be mardomemun negā kon/به مردممون نگا(ه) کن

/muānā/موانا

(back translation: "Sit down and watch closely, look at our people, Moana")

9.   I can lead with pride, I can make us strong

/pas manam tarāneye rahe ḵudamo misorāyam/ پس منم ترانه‌ی راه خودمو می‌سرایم

(back translation: "So I sing my own song")

In two other two songs, "You're Welcome" (example 10) and "Shiny" (example 11) from *Moana*, Maui is associated in lyrics with a *demi-god.* Since the common belief in Iran is monotheism, demi-god is substituted with other options.

10.   I know it's a lot: the hair, the bod!

        When you're staring at a demi-god

موهام افشون خودم بی باک /muhām afšun ḵudam bibāk/

قدرتم بیشتر از آب و باد/qodratam bištar-az āb-o bād/

(back translation: "My hair is cool and I'm fearless, my power is more than water and wind").

11.   Little Maui's having trouble with his look

        You little semi-demi-mini-god

مائویی دیگه قدرت قبلو نداره/māoi dige qodrate qabl-o nadāre/

قهرمان کوچولوی بیچاره/qahramāne kučuluye bičāre/

(back translation: "Maui doesn't have power as he used to, you little poor hero")

The last example concerning ideology-driven Persian translation is extracted from two stanzas in the song "How Far I'll Go (reprise)." In these segments, Moana is expressing herself about leaving her family behind, and embarks on an adventure on her own, away from everyone and everything she knows. However, in the translation of example 12, it is implied that it is not acceptable for a teenage girl to start a trip on her own, as shown in example 13 as well, that 'she won't be alone'.

12.   All the time wondering where I want to be, is behind me

وقتی با خانواده ام هستم ناهمسو/vaqti bā ḵānevadam hastam nāhamsu/

        I'm in my own, to worlds unknown

آیندم نیست، جز یک سو سو/āyandam nist joz yek susu/

(back translation: "As long as I do not agree with my parents, my future is nothing but a glimmer of light")

13.   Yes, I know

آره می‌دونم/āre midunam/

        That I can go

تنها نمی‌مونb /tanhā nemimunam/

(back translation: "Yes, I know, I won't be alone")

There are plenty similar cases in the corpus. Such rather drastic changes in the meaning of lyrics are not unforeseen, as Marc (2015: 5) maintains, "what music means is determined by its cultures of production, distribution and reception", hence in reproduction of music, meaning is again culturally determined. As she affirms this proposition that music "changes, often dramatically, when transferred from one culture to another, generating specific soundscapes in each culture" (Marc 2015: 15).

The other factor that differentiates between the singable translations and non-singable ones is Stress. After Singability and Segmentation of lines, Stress is the highest item by the average score of 9.56 (10%) among singable translations; whereas for non-singable translations, this value is lessened to 4.20 (6%).
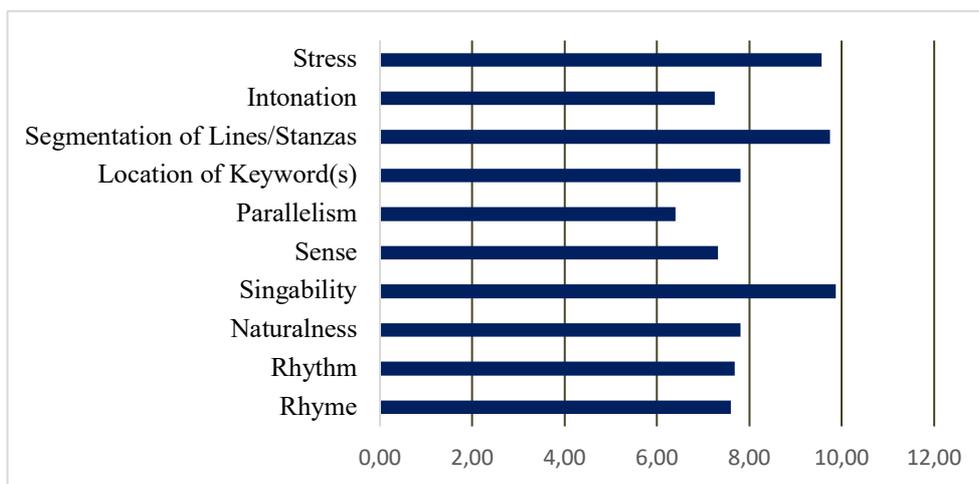

Figure 5. Average of Total Singability Items Value in Singable Translations
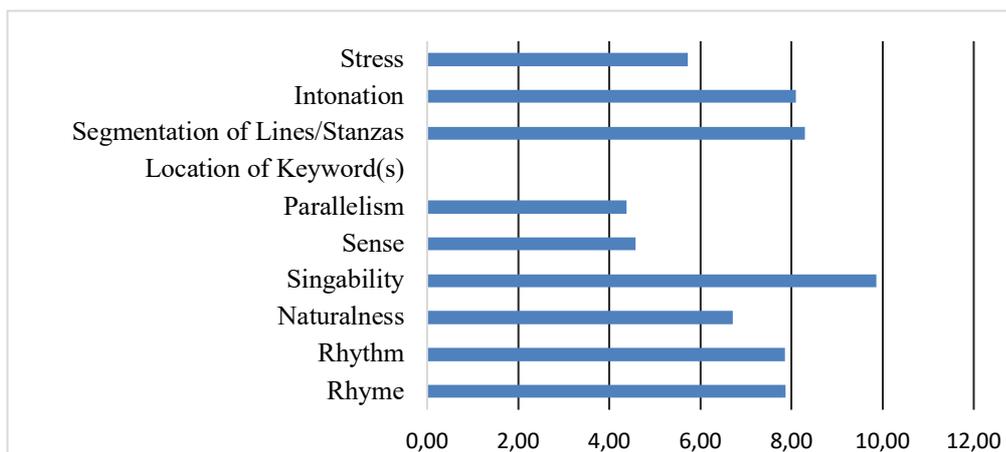

Figure 6. Average of Total Singability Items Value in Non-singable Translations

Another fairly significant distinction between these two groups of data is the value of Intonation. The average score for Intonation of singable songs is 7.25 points which makes it the second lowest item value for this group (by 8%); on the contrary, Intonation of non-singable translations is the second highest score with 9.33 points (14% of the total score). The most probable reason is the fact that interrogatives are turned into declaratives in Persian translations in 80% of intonation cases. The shift from interactive sentences to declarative ones, changes the high-pitched sounds into rather flat sounds, hence alters Intonation. A potential explanation for this contradiction in results, is that sacrificing Intonation could help preserving Sense—as mentioned before, Sense scored higher in singable translations than in non-singable ones.

7. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to attest the applicability of the proposed singability model to the translated songs from English into Persian to arrive at a less subjective way to analyze translated and dubbed songs. Twenty-six translated songs were selected and analyzed against the merged model. Translations of songs had been marked based on Low's (2008) scoring scale. They had been scored from null to ten. The ideal value was eight points for each item, thus eighty points overall. Sixteen songs scored eighty and more, hence decided as singable translations.

Findings of the singability analysis showed that although Singability and Segmentation of lines scored the highest (9.88 and 9.33 points, respectively), they are not the proper criteria for separating singable translations from non-singable ones, since these two items also gained the highest scores in non-singable group of data (Singability scored 9.86 and Segmentation marked 8.29 points). Two determinative factors of singability analysis that can differentiate between singable translated songs and non-singable ones, are Location of keywords and Sense. While Location of the keywords obtained 7.81 points in singable translation group, this number is zero for the non-singable group, meaning that, not even one song in the non-singable translations group could maintain the location of keywords. In terms of Sense, singable translations scored 7.31 points, whereas this item value for non-singable translations was considerably lower (4.60 points). Sense can be easily manipulated because its transfer is conditioned by different facets including melodic features maintenance (such as rhythm and intonation), technical aspects (image-sound coherence), and universal and cultural references (Gato 2013). In the current corpus, in addition to cultural references, ideology influenced Sense as well which led to some changes in semantic details. Translators adopted two major strategies to deal with cultural references in lyrics. They either deleted the cultural-specific units, or replaced it with a Persian cultural reference (as in example 6, a type of dance was adapted to a kind of Persian music). In this respect,

cultural element is associated with a translational aid rather than a limitation. Therefore, it is vital to anticipate such semantic changes in translated songs, "because the heteroglot social, historical and aesthetic conditions to which it was originally linked would have changed too" (Marc 2015: 15).

In addition to Location of keywords and Sense, Stress and Intonation distinguished between singable and non-singable translations as well. Stress was the third highest item value by the average score of 9.56 in singable translations; however, the value of this item for non-singable translations extensively dropped to 4.20. Intonation was the second lowest item in singable translations, while it is represented as the second highest component among non-singable translations. The reason for this is the shift from interrogatives in original songs into declaratives in Persian translations. Therefore, Intonation is sacrificed in singable translations in order to maintain the Sense.

In order to assess the singability of translated songs of animations into Persian, we devised a model that takes into consideration the technical, musical, suprasegmental, semantic, and expressive features. In fact, singability analysis does not have to be merely restricted to these elements. Reception studies can assist in this respect as well. Reception studies for dubbed audiovisual products proved beneficial in establishing dubbing quality standards. These standards are potentially the ultimate objective of translators, dubbing directors, and voice actors (Chaume 2007).

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Appendix:

Song Translation's Analysis

In this section, the original song lyrics and its transcribed Persian dubbed version are separated into a number of stanzas. Subsequently, the translated lines are analyzed in terms of the singability model's components. The song "How Far I'll Go" is proposed here as an example; all the other songs went through the same analysis process.

Parallelism is specified by underlines and the number of syllables for each line is written in parentheses in front of them. Also, whenever a stress of a word is important to mention, it will be shown by '' on that word or syllable. Besides, the ascending arrow shows a high pitched intonation and the descending one shows a low pitched intonation.

How Far I'll Go

Songwriters: Lin-Manuel Miranda

How Far I'll Go lyrics © Walt Disney Music Company, Universal Music Publishing Group

Stanza 1

1. I've been ˈstaring at the edge of the water (11)
2. ˈLong as I can remember, never really knowing why (14)
3. I wish I could be the perfect daughter (10)
4. But I come back to the ˈwater, no matter how hard I try (15)

چشم ٔدوختم به کنارهی آب (9)

از وقتی خودمو شناختم، چرا مونده همیشه به یادم (19)

ای کاش بودم یه دختر پرتلاش (11)

ولی هر لحظه ٔهر دم، ساحل بود همدم (12)

Note 1: Stress on the word 'water' in the last line has been placed on 'هر' (meaning 'every') in the dubbed version and it seems somehow strange to emphasize on such a word. Besides, the translation has 3 syllables less than the original; therefore, the voice actress has to sing the short vowel /æ/ (in /hær/) on three long notes. This fact makes the stress located on the word 'هر' unusual.

Note 2: 2 points are reduced in rhythm because of the rather great deviation between syllable counts in lines 2 and 4 with their translations.

Note 3: One point is reduced in naturalness because of the unnatural word orders in lines 1, 3, and 4 (verbs have come before the adjective or object).

Note 4: Based on rhyme scales demonstrated in table 2, 10 points are considered for the rich rhyming words 'یادم' and 'همدم'.

Stanza 2

1. <u>Every</u> ˈturn I take, <u>every</u> ˈtrail I track (10)
2. <u>Every</u> ˈpath I make, <u>every</u> ˈroad leads back (10)
3. To the place I know, where I cannot go, where I long to be (15)

سر ٔ<u>هر</u> پیچ و خم ٔ<u>هر</u> مسیر (9)

توی ٔ<u>هر</u> جاده که شدم درگیر (11)

ساختن قدم بعدی، هدفم بود بعید(13)

Note: 8 points are allocated to the good rhymes 'مسیر' and 'درگیر'.

Stanza 3

1. See the line where the sky meets the sea? It ˈcalls me (12)
2. And no one ˈknows, how far it ˈgoes (8)
3. If the wind in my sail on the sea stays behind me (13)
4. One day I'll know, if I go there's just no telling how far I'll go (16)

آسمون و دریا همنشین، تو ˈببین (12)

تا کجاˈها، می‌شه ˈپیدا (8)

اگه بوزه نسیمی به بادبان قایقم (15)

از غما فارغم، به راه دور دریاها راغبم (16)

Note 1: One point is reduced in terms of naturalness for the location of the verb 'بوزه' at the beginning of the conditional sentence in line 3.

Note 2: 5 points are considered for the internal rhyming words in line 2 ('کجاها' and 'پیدا'). Also, 8 points are given to the good rhymes of lines 3 and 4 ('قایقم' and 'راغبم').

Stanza 4

1. <u>I know everybody on this island</u>, seems so happy on this island (18)
2. Everything is by design (7)
3. <u>I know everybody on this island</u> has a role on this island (17)
4. So maybe I can roll with mine (8)

<u>مردم این جزیره</u>، شادن خوشی نمی‌میره (15)

کارا خوب پیش می‌ره (5)

<u>مردم این جزیره</u> راهشون بلدن (14)

ترانشونو سرودن (8)

Note 1: 10 points are allocated to each rhyming pairs 'نمی‌میره', 'می‌ره' and 'بلدن', 'سرودن'.

Note 2: 2 points are reduced in rhythm because of the contradiction of syllable numbers in line 1 and line 3.

Stanza 5

1. <u>I can</u> lead with pride, <u>I can</u> make us strong (10)
2. I'll be satisfied if I play along (10)
3. But the voice inside sings a different song (11)
4. What is wrong with me? (5)

<div dir="rtl">

پس منم ترانه‌ي (7)

راه خودمو می‌سرایم (9)

نیست هدف اینجا موندنم (8)

چم شده من؟ (4)

</div>

Note 1: Another 2 points are reduced because of disarranged rhythm caused by difference in syllable counts of lines 1 and 3.

Note 2: Another point is lessened in naturalness because of disarranged word order in line 3.

Note 3: 8 points are given to rhyming words 'می‌سرایم' and 'موندنم'.

Note 4: One point is reduced in terms of line segmentation. Line 2 in translation is supposed to complete line 1; whereas in the original text, these two lines are not dependent on each other. Also, the singer has to lengthen the short vowel /e/ at the end of the first line, to semantically connect it to the next line which aesthetically, does not sound good, especially that this vowel in Persian syntax only connects nouns in a noun phrase and has no semantic meaning whatsoever.

Stanza 6

1. See the light as it shines on the sea? It's blinding (12)
2. But no one knows, how deep it goes (8)
3. And it seems like it's calling out to me, so come find me (14)
4. And let me know, what's beyond that line, will I cross that line? (14)

<div dir="rtl">

می‌درخشه آفتاب روی آب، دلم بی‌تاب (13)

نداره حساب، عمق این آب (9)

توی گوشم می‌خونه صدایی رو آب (12)

بشم سوار، اون ور صخره، نگو که سخته (14)

</div>

Note 1: The following scores are allocated to the rhyming words in this stanza: 10 points to the internal rhyming words in line 1 'آفتاب' and 'بی‌تاب', 8 points to another internal rhyming pair in line 2 ('حساب' and 'آب'), and 8 more points to words 'بی‌تاب' and 'آب'.

Note 2: One point is reduced in naturalness because of the unusual sentence in last two lines ' رو آب بشم سوار' (kind of meaning 'I get on water'). This sentence contradicts with the common sense. There may be some other options that could still make sense, convey the same whole meaning and more importantly, would not seem unnatural. One option could be as follows:

<div dir="rtl">

می‌درخشه آفتاب روی آب، دلم بی‌تاب

نداره حساب، عمق این آب

</div>

<div dir="rtl">

و انگار منو صدا می‌زنه قایقم (13)

برم باهاش، تا اون ور صخره، نگو که سخته (15)

</div>

The original two last lines together, have 28 syllables, so do the options we offered here. Therefore, rhythm will not be endangered. Supposedly, there will be other options available that would avoid unnatural structures and semantic content.

Note 3: Furthermore, there are two cases of high pitched intonation in lines 1 and 4 that are not observed in the dubbed version.

Stanza 7

1. The line where the sky meets the sea? It calls me (11)
2. And no one knows, how far it goes (8)
3. If the wind in my sail on the sea stays behind me (13)
4. One day I'll know, how far I'll go (8)

<div dir="rtl">

آسمون و دریا همنشین، تو ببین (11)

تا کجاها، می‌شه پیدا (8)

اگه بوزه نسیمی به بادبان قایقم (15)

به دور دست‌ها، رهسپارم (8)

</div>

Note: Two rhyming words at the very end of lines 3 and 4 earn 8 points.

Note 2: The first three lines are parallel to the third stanza of the song and this parallelism is transferred by repeating the same lines in the target version.

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